

4 ways to celebrate Youth Service Month virtually

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Youth Service Month is a special time in Rotary. Throughout the month of May, members of Rotary clubs, Rotaract, Interact, and those involved in Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and Rotary Youth Exchange celebrate the opportunities Rotary provides to connect, grow through service, develop leadership skills, mentor or be mentored, and have fun.

The outbreak of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, may alter the way we observe Youth Service Month this year. But it need not dampen our enthusiasm, excitement, and gratitude for these programs and the volunteers who make them possible. Here are four ways you can safely celebrate:

1. **Serve.** Make the month special by identifying needs in your community, and getting creative with ways to meet them within the safety of local shelter in place guidelines. This could include sewing masks for essential workers, collecting and distributing supplies for shut-ins, or creating a phone chain to offer a message of encouragement to seniors who are isolated and alone. [Check out this list of projects](#) being conducted by Rotary clubs around the world for inspiration.
2. **Stay Connected.** Schedule an online meeting with your sponsor Rotary club, or with program participants and alumni. Recognize past accomplishments and discuss ways to work together in the future to strengthen participation. Visit the [Meeting Online](#) learning topic to find and share resources, join discussions, and ask for expert advice about creating online meeting spaces.

3. **Unite behind a fundraiser.** Empower Rotary's response to the pandemic by donating to the [Disaster Response Fund](#). Grants from this fund are already providing hospitals in Belgium, Croatia, and Italy with lifesaving ventilators; and equipping frontline healthcare workers with personal protective equipment in Korea, Nigeria, the Philippines, Spain, and the United States. In India, disaster response grants are providing disinfectant sprayers, beds, and mattresses for healthcare facilities.

4. **Set and achieve goals.** Take this month to focus on initiatives that will help your club earn this year's [Rotary Citation](#). Brainstorm sustainable service projects, ways to increase giving to The Rotary Foundation, and build awareness of Rotary in your community. Young people are looking for a way to make a difference. Show them how Rotary equips them to do so, especially in this time of crisis. And watch your membership grow.